

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 SES-02 SAA-01 SSM-03 AID-05 IO-13 HA-05
/105 W

-----123969 061824Z /43

R 061100Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 184
INFO USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 08485

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IR
SUBJ: OPPOSITION PROGRAMS AND PRONOUNCEMENTS, GOI POST-
PONED ANNOUNCEMENT OF OWN PROGRAM

SUMMARY: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR OPPOSITION LEADERS CONTINUE
TO REJECT COMPROMISE OR NEGOTIATION WITH NEW GOVERNMENT, BUT
OPENLY CONDEMN VIOLENCE AND CALL FOR PEACEFUL POLITICAL ACTION.
SHARIATMADARI, REPORTEDLY ASSUMING TITLE OF "ERJAH" OR
SUPREME SHIITE LEADER, DECLARED RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT BELONGS TO
NO PARTICULAR PARTY. HE AND OTHERS DENIED OPPOSITION IS
AGAINST RELIGIOUS MINORITIES (EXCEPT FOR BAHAIS). SHARIAT-
MADARI SAID HE WILL GIVE GOVERNMENT REASONABLE TIME TO MEET
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DEMANDS, BUT MANY CAN BE MET IMMEDIATELY. SEVERAL
OPPOSITIONISTS, INCLUDING NATIONAL FRONT, SAY THEY WILL
BOYCOTT ELECTIONS IF HELD UNDER EXISTING LAW. NATIONAL
FRONT LEADER SAID COMMUNIST PARTY SHOULD BE LEGALIZED.
NEW VERSION OF OLD SOCIALIST SOCIETY OF FREE MUSLIMS
ANNOUNCED RETURN TO POLITICAL ARENA. MORE RELIGIOUS
LEADERS HAVE RETURNED FROM EXILE. GOI HAS POSTPONED

PRESENTING ITS PROGRAM TO PARLIAMENT UNTIL SEPT. 10. END SUMMARY.

1. OPPOSITION LEADERS HAVE REPEATED IN SPEECHES AND INTERVIEWS THAT THEY WILL NOT NEGOTIATE OR COMPROMISE WITH NEW SHARIF-EMAMI GOVERNMENT. AYATOLLAH SHARIATMADARI REITERATED IT IS UP TO GOVERNMENT TO MEET DEMANDS OF THE PEOPLE. INITIAL REPORTS THAT HE GAVE GOVERNMENT TIME LIMIT OF THREE MONTHS WERE DENIED BY SPOKESMAN. SHARIATMADARI DID SAY THAT AS GOVERNMENT ALTERED CALENDAR OVERNIGHT BY DECREE, IT COULD MEET OTHER DEMANDS, SUCH AS FREEING POLITICAL PRISONERS. RELIGIOUS DEMANDS WERE CLEARLY STATED IN COMMUNIQUE FROM AYATOLLAH SEYED ABDOLLAH SHIRAZI OF MASHAD. SHIRAZI DEMANDED: (A) ALL LAWS VIOLATING KORAN MUST BE ABOLISHED; (B) ALL EXILED MUSLIM LEADERS, ESPECIALLY KHOMEINI, MUST BE ALLOWED TO RETURN; (C) PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT VIOLENCE; (D) LESSENING OF FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY TAXES; (E) COORDINATION OF CULTURAL POLICIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH TENETS OF ISLAM; (F) CABINET MINISTERS MUST BE SHIITE MUSLIMS; AND (G) DISMISSAL OF ALL BAHAIS FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICE.

2. QUESTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES HAS BECOME A SORE POINT, AND ITEMS (F) AND (G) ARE NOT LIKELY TO SOOTHE MATTERS. SHARIATMADARI TOOK PAINS TO EMPHASIZE OPPOSITION

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MOVEMENT IS NOT AGAINST JEWS, CHRISTIANS, OR ZOROASTRIANS. MEMBERS OF THESE GROUPS HAVE REPORTED RECEIVING THREATENING LETTERS. WHILE ASSURING THE OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED MINORITIES THAT THEY WOULD BE PROTECTED, SHARIATMADARI POINTEDLY EXCLUDED BAHAI COMMUNITY, WHICH HAS "ACTED AGAINST IRAN'S INTERESTS AND IN COMPLICITY WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS IN THE PAST."

3. SHARIATMADARI REEMPHASIZED THERE IS NO DIVISION AMONG SHIITE LEADERS. HE AND KHOMEINI, WHO SHOULD RETURN TO IRAN, CAN COOPERATE FULLY. (COMMENT: THIS REMAINS PUBLIC LINE, BUT IN OTHER CONTACTS SHARIATMADARI IS MUCH MORE CAUTIOUS AND LEAVES ROOM FOR EVENTUAL DIFFERENCES OF OPINION.) ACCORDING TO FRENCH ACCOUNT SHARIATMADARI USED FOR THE FIRST TIME THE TITLE "ERJAH" (SUPREME SHIITE LEADER) TO DESCRIBE HIMSELF. HE ALSO DECLARED RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT IS NOT CONNECTED TO ANY PARTICULAR PARTY: "MY PARTY IS MY NATION." (COMMENT: AN INDIRECT SLAP AT THE NATIONAL FRONT WHICH IS TRYING TO COOPT A RELIGIOUS MASS BASE.) ALTHOUGH ASSERTING RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT WAS PROGRESSIVE, NOT REACTIONARY, HE CONDEMNED "MOVIES WHICH DAMAGE ISLAMIC MORAL AND SPIRITUAL LAWS." HE CALLED, HOWEVER, FOR STRICTLY

NONVIOLENT ACTION.

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4. MORE EXILED RELIGIOUS LEADERS, INCLUDING KHOMEINI'S BROTHER, HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR FORMER CITIES. HOJJATOLISLAM MORTEZA PASANDIDEH, WHO WAS ARRESTED TWO MONTHS AGO, HAS BEEN FREED. OTHER RETURNEES ARE HOJJATOLISLAM NASSER SHIRAZI, WHO WAS EXILED IN BASRA, AND AYATOLLAH HASSAN TABATABAI-QOMI, WHO SPENT TWELVE YEARS EXILE IN KARAJ.

5. OLD RELIGIOUS PRESSURE GROUP ANNOUNCED RETURN TO POLITICAL ARENA. SOCIALIST SOCIETY OF FREE MUSLIMS UNDER SHAIKH MOSTAFA RAHNEMA DECLARED IT WILL FIGHT FOR UNITY AMONG MUSLIMS, DEFEND ISLAMIC IDEALS, AND COMBAT INTERNATIONAL COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM AND ZIONISM.

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6. ON SECULAR FRONT, HARD-LINERS ARE UNMOVED. RAHMATOLLAH MOQADEM, LEADER OF RADICAL MOVEMENT OF IRAN, DEMANDED IMMEDIATE DISSOLUTION OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT AND STATE AND CITY COUNCILS. RADICAL MOVEMENT MANIFESTO LISTS DEMANDS AS FOLLOWS: (A) FULL OBSERVANCE OF CONSTITUTION; (B) FULL FREEDOM FOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS, POLITICAL PARTIES AND TRADE UNIONS; (C) FREEDOM FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND RETURN OF LL THOSE IN EXILE; (D) FULL FREEDOM OF PRESS; (E) INDEPENDENCE OF JUDICIARY; (F) PUNISHMENT OF ALL WHO HAVE VIOLATED RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE; (G) PUNISHMENT OF CORRUPT ELEMENTS; AND (H) INDEPENDENCE OF UNIVERSITIES AND ATTENTION TO STUDENTS' DEMANDS.

7. AHMAD BANI-AHMAD, WHO HEADS UNITY FOR LIBERTY SOCIETY, DEMANDED BOYCOTT OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT, AND HE CALLED FOR A NEW CABINET OF NATIONAL UNITY. LABOURERS' PARTY SPOKESMAN HASSAN VAHIDI ANNOUNCED IT WILL BOYCOTT ELECTIONS. MAHAMAD HOSSEIN ESHAGI-NEJAD, MAJLES DEPUTY FROM TABRIZ AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE WORKER'S ORGANIZATION, ANNOUNCED SEPT 5 THAT HE WAS GOING OVER TO THE OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT "BECAUSE THE WORKERS HAVE BEEN LIED TO BY THE GOVERNMENT." HIS DEFECTION FROM GOI RANKS COULD BE AN INTERESTING HARBINGER OF NEWLY-VISIBLE UNREST IN IRANIAN LABOR.

8. NATIONAL FRONT (INF), APPARENTLY BEST ORGANIZED SECULAR OPPOSITION MOVEMENT, ANNOUNCED IT TOO WILL BOYCOTT ELECTIONS IF HELD UNDER EXISTING LAW. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH GOI MAINTAINS EXISTING LAW WILL GOVERN ELECTIONS, EMB. HAS LEARNED PRIME MINISTER WILL OFFER NEW ELECTION LAW, BUT THIS HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE PUBLIC.). KARIM SANJABI SAID IN SEPT 3 INTERVIEW THAT PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS UNFIT TO RUN ELECTIONS OR OVERSEE TRANSITION. HE REPEATED HE WILL

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NOT NEGOTIATE WITH GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO CLAIMED ASSOCIATION WITH WRITERS UNION AND IRANIAN ASSOCIATION OF JURISTS, ALTHOUGH ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. AT INF RALLY SEPT 2 SANJABI DECLARED COMMUNIST PARTY SHOULD BE LEGALIZED. ALTHOUGH HIS PARTY WOULD NOT ALIGN ITSELF WITH ANY PARTY WHICH HAD FOREIGN CONNECTIONS, HE CLAIMED CHANGES IN COMMUNIST PARTIES IN EUROPE SHOWED THESE PARTIES COULD FUNCTION WITHOUT FOREIGN TIE. AT SAME RALLY DARIOUSH FARUHAR DEMANDED "CHANGE IN THE VERY FOUNDATION OF THE PRESENT POLITICAL SYSTEM." A CHANGE IN CABINET IS INADEQUATE. GOI IS TRYING TO CONVINCE USG THAT IRAN IS UNREADY FOR DEMOCRACY. HE ECHOED RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN WARNING AGAINST USE OF VIOLENCE, WHICH HE CALLED "IRRATIONAL

MEANS AND METHODS."

9. KEYHAN SEPT. 5 EDITORIAL CALLED ON BOTH GOI AND OPPOSITION TO EMPHASIZE PEACE, BUT STRONGLY ATTACKED SANJABI FOR ADVOCATING LEGALIZATION OF TUDEH AND SAID IT HAS "NOT SO FAR RECEIVED A SHRED OF EVIDENCE" THAT "TUDEH WOULD NOW BE INDEPENDENT FROM MOSCOW." KEYHAN ADDED THAT WOULD APPARENTLY RULE OUT INF COOPERATION WITH TUDEH SINCE IT IS ATTACHED TO A FOREIGN POWER.

10. GOI MINISTER OF STATE AZMOUN TOLD PRESS EVENING SEPT. 5 THAT GOI WAS POSTPONING ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITS PROGRAM TO PARLIAMENT UNTIL SEPT. 10. DELAY WAS TAKEN TO ALLOW MAJLES (LOWER HOUSE) TO GATHER IN ITS MEMBERS AND ADEQUATELY PREPARE FOR DISCUSSION. (COMMENT: PARLIAMENTARY SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOI WAS HAVING DIFFICULT TIME FINDING SPOKESMEN OF ADEQUATE STATURE TO DEFEND GOI PROGRAM). AZMOUN SAID COMMENDED AYATOLLAH SHARIATMADARI FOR HIS ROLE IN KEEPING ID-E-FETR DEMONSTRATIONS SEPT 4 PEACEFUL. AZMOUN SAID MOST LOGICAL GOI OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO PURSUE CREATION OF A CLIMATE IN WHICH ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOCIAL GROUPS COULD FREELY PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS.
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Message Attributes

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TAGS: PGOV, IR
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